



# THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year.

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## THE LIBERTY BOYS' NERVE; OR NOT AFRAID OF THE KING'S MINIONS. BY HARRY MOORE.

CENTRAL CHICAGO BOOK STORE.



"Now, boys," shouted Dick, "one determined rush and the day is won! Follow me!" The British troops were plainly dismayed at the brave and fearless move made by the Liberty Boys.



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## The Liberty Boys' Nerve

OR,

### NOT AFRAID OF THE KING'S MINIONS.

BY HARRY MOORE.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### "NOT AFRAID OF THE KING'S MINIONS."

"Orderly!"

"Yes, your excellency."

"There is in my army a company of youths known as the 'Liberty Boys of '76.' Their commander is a youth named Dick Slater."

"Yes, your excellency."

"You know the young man when you see him?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"Then go and find him at once; and when you have found him bring him to me. I wish to see him."

"Yes, your excellency."

The orderly saluted and withdrew from the tent which was the temporary headquarters of General Washington, the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental army.

It was the third day of November, 1776.

The Continental army had just retreated from White Plains, and had taken up a position at North Castle.

This position was absolutely impregnable.

All the British troops on American soil could not have successfully stormed it.

General Howe had followed the patriot troops, had taken a look at their position, and then had withdrawn his army,

returning to the Hudson, and going thence southward to Dobb's Ferry.

General Washington sat looking at the floor, pondering deeply, after the orderly departed.

Fifteen minutes passed.

Then the orderly re-entered, accompanied by a handsome, manly-looking youth of about eighteen years of age.

"Dick Slater, your excellency," announced the orderly.

The commander-in-chief looked up and smiled.

"Ah, Master Dick, good morning!" he said, extending his hand, which Dick took with becoming modesty and deference. "I have some work for you, Dick."

"I surmised as much, your excellency," said Dick Slater, for he it was.

Dick, while but a mere youth, had already distinguished himself both as a soldier and as a spy, he having been very successful in the latter role. He had succeeded where men spies had failed and been captured by the redcoats.

"The British," went on the commander-in-chief, "have withdrawn, and have gone southward along the Hudson. Now, it may be their intention to attack Fort Washington—in fact, I think that they will do so first, and then move across New Jersey and try to capture Philadelphia. Believing this, I have made arrangements to send five thousand troops over into New Jersey to head the British off in case they start toward Philadelphia; but the immediate



danger is to Fort Washington, and also Fort Lee, though to the latter point in less degree, as it is across the river, and now I wish you to carry a dispatch to General Greene, instructing him to evacuate Fort Washington at once, and make arrangements to evacuate Fort Lee also. Will you attempt to take the dispatch for me?"

"I will, your excellency."

The answer was prompt and decided.

"There will be great danger, Dick."

"I am aware of that, sir, but I am not afraid of the king's minions."

"I have ample proof of that fact, Dick," said the commander-in-chief, in a tone of approval. "I know you are not afraid of the king's minions, and I am aware, also, that you are as wise as you are brave, and for that reason I have selected you to carry the dispatch to Greene."

"Thank you, sir! I esteem it an honor to be selected for the duty, and if it is possible, I will deliver the dispatch to General Greene."

"I am sure of that. The country between here and Fort Washington is overrun with the British, however, and your task will be a difficult and dangerous one."

"It will simply require greater care on my part, your excellency. I think I shall be able to get through, and reach Fort Washington in safety."

"I hope and pray that you may succeed, my boy!"

"When shall I start, your excellency?"

"As soon as you like. I have the dispatch all ready, but in case you should be captured destroy it, as I have written some additional instructions of a general nature, which I would not have fall into the hands of the British for anything in the world."

"I will remember and do as you order, your excellency."

"In case you should be forced to destroy the dispatch yet should make your escape and succeed after all in reaching Fort Washington, tell General Greene, verbally, that it is my order that he shall evacuate the fort, and make arrangements to evacuate Fort Lee also."

"I will do so, your excellency."

"Very good; that is all, save that I will caution you to be very careful. I could not get along without you, Dick, so do not let the British capture you!"

Dick's heart swelled with pride at being spoken to in such fashion by the commander-in-chief of the patriot army, and he mentally decided that the British would have hard work capturing him.

"I shall be careful, sir," he said aloud.

General Washington then handed Dick a folded document, which the youth placed in an inside pocket of his coat.

Dick was about to withdraw, when a thought struck him, and he asked:

"Where will I find my company of 'Liberty Boys' when I wish to rejoin it, your excellency?" he asked.

"I leave that to you, Dick," was the reply; "I shall leave seven thousand troops here, will take three thousand up to West Point, where I go to reconnoitre a site for the fortress, and I am sending five thousand troops over into New Jersey, to a point near Hackensack. Your company may remain here, or accompany the New Jersey division, whichever you prefer."

"Let them go over into New Jersey, then, your excellency. It will be closer for me to join them there, and I think there is more chance for getting in action there than here, don't you?"

"Yes, indeed! I do not think the British will attack here. I shall keep the troops here only until I learn definitely what are the plans of General Howe; and if you could do anything toward learning his plans, Dick, it would be a big help to me."

"I will do all I can to secure some information, your excellency."

"I am sure of that, Dick."

Dick and the commander-in-chief talked ten or fifteen minutes longer, and then the youth bade the general good-by, and saluting, withdrew.

"A brave boy—a wonderful youth!" murmured the commander-in-chief, when Dick had gone; "ah! would that I had ten thousand such! I would drive the British into the ocean!"

Dick hastened to the quarters of his company of "Liberty Boys."

He was greeted eagerly by a youth of about his own age—a bright-looking, handsome young fellow, who asked:

"What now, Dick? Some more spy work?"

This youth was Bob Estabrook, Dick's friend and companion spy.

They had had some lively adventures among the British, while engaged in the precarious work of spying on the redcoats.

"Not exactly spy work this time, Bob," was Dick's reply.

"No? What then?"

"I am to carry a dispatch to General Greene, at Fort Washington."

"Ah! And am I going along, old man?"

Bob's eyes shone with eagerness and excitement.

"Not this time, Bob."

Bob's face fell.

It was evident that he was greatly disappointed.



"There is work for you, though, Bob," went on Dick. "Our company of 'Liberty Boys' is to accompany the division which is going over into New Jersey. It is going to Hackensack, and I will rejoin you there, after I have delivered the dispatch to General Greene."

"Dick, it is going to be a dangerous undertaking, making your way to Fort Washington," said Bob; "I will wager that the country between here and there is thick with gangs of redcoats!"

"I do not doubt it, Bob; but it doesn't matter, I am going to get through and deliver the dispatch somehow, or die trying!"

"You had better let me go with you, Dick!"

But Dick shook his head.

"I think that in this matter it will be better to go alone, Bob," he said.

Bob looked disappointed, but he was accustomed to doing as Dick wished, and he said no more about being allowed to accompany his friend. He was evidently afraid Dick would get into trouble, however, for he cautioned him again and again to be careful, and not take any chances.

"Oh, I am not going to take any unnecessary chances, Bob," said Dick; "I will not promise, however, that I won't take chances. If I have to do so in order to keep from being captured, I will take them, you may be sure."

"Say, but I shall be uneasy till I see you again, old man!" Bob declared.

"There is no need of that. I am not going to let the redcoats get me, Bob, old man! I will join you at Hackensack within two days, just as surely as that the day arrives."

"I hope so!"

Dick simply smiled, and told his friend to not look so blue, and then he went about getting ready to start on his dangerous expedition.

The other members of the company of "Liberty Boys" added their cautions to Bob's. They all loved their brave, dashing young leader, and they would be sorely grieved if he should be killed or captured by the redcoats.

Dick reassured them.

"Don't be alarmed for me, boys," he said; "I shall be on the lookout, and am not going to let the redcoats catch me napping."

At last Dick was ready, and he rode out of the camp, followed by the cheers of the "Liberty Boys," and indeed by the cheers of almost the entire force of patriot soldiers, for he had become known to all, and was loved and admired for his bravery and noble character in general.

Dick was mounted on a splendid charger.

It was a horse that he had captured over on Long Island, and was the favorite charger of General Howe.

Dick was well armed, having two pairs of pistols in his belt, and two more pairs in the saddle bags. He carried no musket, as it would interfere if he wished to travel fast, or through the timber or brush.

Dick rode southward at a moderate pace.

He had practically the whole day before him in which to reach a point halfway to Fort Washington, for he felt that it would not be prudent to try to ride the last half of the way during daylight. He would be sure to be seen and captured by the British.

He would proceed to White Plains, and then journey on southward, slowly and cautiously, until nightfall, when he would feel safe in making a determined attempt to get past the British and reach Fort Washington.

He rode along, and an hour and a half later came in sight of White Plains.

He brought "Major," his horse, down to a walk now, and kept a sharp lookout.

He thought it barely possible that some of the British might have remained in the vicinity as scouts, to keep watch on the patriot army, should it attempt to come back southward.

Dick knew a man in White Plains who was a strong patriot.

The youth felt sure that if he could get to see this man he would be able to secure information that would benefit him, and make it easier for him to proceed without being in danger of running upon the redcoats.

The youth knew it would be somewhat risky to venture into the village, but he decided to do it, anyway.

As he rode into the village the very thing that he had feared might happen did happen.

Half a dozen redcoats emerged from a tavern, where drinks were sold, and when they saw the youth on the magnificent charger they yelled at him at once.

"Halt, there!" cried one; "who are you, and where did you get that horse?"

"None of your business!" retorted Dick.

"Ha! so you are saucy, are you, my young gamecock? I think you are a suspicious character, and I order you to dismount and surrender, in the king's name!"

The redcoats were half drunk, and Dick felt sure they could not shoot straight.

If they were to fire upon him, they would miss, unless by an accident, and he decided to make a break for liberty.

He whirled his horse around, and put spurs to the noble animal.



Major responded nobly, and went down the street like a whirlwind.

The redcoats fired a volley, but their aim was very bad, and none of the bullets came anywhere near the fleeing youth.

Dick uttered a yell of defiance, and was quickly beyond rifle shot of the British soldiers.

He saw the redcoats running toward a stable at the rear of the tavern, and knew what their action meant.

They had horses there, and were going to mount and pursue him.

"All right; come ahead, my fine fellows!" Dick murmured; "I'll just see if I can't fool you a bit, however!"

Dick rode rapidly till he was hidden from the view of any one in the village by the timber, and then he turned aside from the road and began describing a semicircle.

Twenty minutes later he rode into the village from the opposite side from that on which he had rode out.

He could see nothing of the redcoats, and rightly judged that they had ridden away in pursuit of him.

The youth rode directly to the home of the man whom he knew to be a patriot.

Dismounting, he tied his horse and made his way to the door and knocked.

His friend came to the door, and when he saw who his visitor was, he greeted him pleasantly and invited him in.

Dick was there not more than ten minutes, but he learned considerable that would be of benefit to him.

Then he bade his friend good-by, and, mounting his horse, rode toward the south.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CAPTURE OF THE REDCOATS.

Dick rode southward till he came to a house which stood perhaps a hundred yards from the road.

A lane led up to the house.

On each side of the lane was a row of trees.

As Dick came opposite the end of the lane he glanced up it toward the house.

He was startled to see a dozen redcoats on horseback.

They were riding down the lane toward him.

They saw Dick at the same moment he saw them.

They uttered shouts, and spurred their horses forward.

"They must be the fellows who were at the village, and a few more additional!" the youth thought; "well, I will give them a merry chase!"

Then he spoke a sharp word of command to Major, and the noble animal leaped forward into a swift gallop instantly.

"Halt! Halt!" came the cry from the redcoats. "Stop, or we will fire!"

"Fire, and be hanged to you!" retorted Dick, defiantly. "You can't hit the side of a barn at ten paces!"

A yell of rage went up from the redcoats.

Then, immediately afterward, crack! crack! went the pistols.

They evidently suspected Dick of being a spy, or a dispatch-bearer.

They had as evidently fired with the best intentions, as the bullets whistled dangerously near.

Dick drew a pistol, and, turning in his saddle, took quick aim and fired.

A redcoat reeled in his saddle, but did not fall.

"I hit one of the fellows, anyway!" said Dick, grimly. "I don't like to do it, but if they will chase me and fire upon me, they must abide the consequences. I do not intend letting them have it all their own way!"

Dick fired a couple of more shots, and the redcoats he noticed fell back slightly.

They did not like to hear the whistle of the bullets from the youth's pistols.

Dick drew steadily away from his pursuers, and at last lost sight of them as he reached a turn in the road.

Half a mile further on the road made another turn, and as he rode around the turn he found himself confronted by a band of men with rifles in their hands.

They leveled the rifles as they saw Dick, and cried out: "Halt!"

Dick's quick eye took in the appearance of the men, and he jumped to the conclusion that they were not Tories.

He believed they were patriots.

Dick raised his right hand and rode forward fearlessly.

"Are you patriots?" he asked, eagerly.

"We are; are you?" came back the reply from a handsome young man of twenty-five years, who was evidently the leader.

"I am!" replied Dick; "and now, if you will do as I say, you can capture some redcoats! There is a band of a dozen of them following me, and they will be here in a few moments. If you will conceal yourselves in the edge of the timber, here, you can surprise and capture them when they get here."

"Just the thing!" said the young man; "a dozen of them, you say?"

"Yes."

"Will you remain with us and see the thing done?"



"Yes, indeed!" said Dick; "I want to have a hand in it!"

All hastened aside into the timber bordering the road.

Dick led Major back a ways, and tied him to a tree.

Then he rejoined the band of patriots.

"Be ready to leap out into the road when they reach here," instructed Dick. "They will be riding at a good gait, and will get past if we are not careful."

"We won't let them get past!" was the reply of the commander of the little band of patriots.

They waited eagerly.

Soon the clatter of hoofbeats was heard.

Then the band of redcoats came into view around the turn.

"Ready!" was the low command of the leader of the band of patriots.

Then, just before the redcoats came even with them, the patriots leaped out into the road, leveled their guns and cried:

"Halt! or you are dead men!"

The redcoats were taken completely by surprise.

They brought their horses to a standstill very quickly.

"Dismount!" roared the young leader of the patriot band; "down, instantly!"

The redcoats dismounted.

They saw they were outnumbered two to one.

And besides they had been taken by surprise.

Their pistols were in their holsters.

Before they could draw their weapons they would be shot to pieces.

So they dismounted, and when ordered to do so, sat down beside the road.

Then their hands were tied together behind their backs, and they were prisoners.

"Well, how do you like it?" asked Dick of the leader of the redcoats. "It doesn't pay to chase 'rebels,' after all, does it?"

The officer growled something in reply, but it was not intelligible.

He, as were all of them, was greatly chagrined.

They had been chasing a "rebel" to try to capture him, and had themselves been captured.

It must have been very galling to their pride.

But they had to stand it.

Or, rather, they had to "sit" it.

"What shall we do with them?" asked the young patriot leader, whose name was Harry Morton.

"Take them to General Washington's headquarters," replied Dick.

"Where is that?"

"At North Castle. I have just come from there."

"I know where it is. We will take them there at once."

"It will be quite a task to get them there," said Dick; "but the commander-in-chief will be glad to get the prisoners, as it will give him just so many more to use in negotiating for exchanges for American prisoners in the British troops' hands."

The redcoats were placed on their horses, tied there, and then the patriot band started up the road, leading the horses.

Dick led Major out into the road, mounted, and road on toward the south.

Dick rode onward for a couple of hours.

He proceeded at a moderate gait, however.

He knew that he was approaching a part of the country where the British would be thicker.

The main army, he believed, was over on the bank of the Hudson, near Dobb's Ferry, but there would be foraging bands of the soldiers, and he would be likely to run up against some of these bands if he was not very careful.

He decided to stop and wait till nightfall before proceeding further.

Presently he came to a log cabin which stood at the foot of a steep hill, and on the bank of a creek which was winding its way toward the Sound.

Dick rode up in front of the cabin and stopped.

"Here will be as good a place to stop as any," he said to himself; "I can stay here till dark, get my supper, and then continue on in safety."

He leaped to the ground, and approaching the door, knocked upon it.

There was no reply, and Dick knocked again.

He heard footsteps within.

They approached the door.

The door opened—slowly, and only about a foot.

A girl's face appeared at the opening.

The face was a rarely beautiful one.

But it had a frightened look.

The girl could not be more than sixteen, Dick thought.

Dick doffed his hat, and, bowing, said:

"I am a traveler, miss, and would like to stop and rest awhile and get a bite to eat. Could you favor me in this respect?"

The girl looked at Dick, and seemed to hesitate.

She was evidently favorably impressed by the youth's looks, however.

"I shall be very much obliged, miss," said Dick, earnestly; "I have had nothing to eat since morning, and am beginning to feel hungry."



Still the girl hesitated, and Dick thought he was going to be turned away; but suddenly the girl said:

"You may stop if you wish, sir. You can tie your horse in the stable, which is a little ways up the hill there, as you can see."

"Will I find feed for my horse also?"

"I think so, sir."

"Thank you; I will pay you liberally for what myself and horse eat."

"That is all right, sir," was the reply.

Dick led Major up the hill to the stable, and leading the horse into a stall, tied him and placed corn and hay before him.

Then, patting Major's neck and eliciting an appreciative whinny from the intelligent animal, Dick walked back to the house and entered.

The girl told him to sit down, indicating a chair, and the youth seated himself.

He looked around him with interest.

He had expected to see at least one person besides the girl, but was surprised to find that there was no one there save her.

The girl evidently divined his thoughts, for she said:

"I live here with my father. My mother is dead."

"Ah!" said Dick, in a sympathetic tone; "where is your father now?"

"He went to Tarrytown this morning," was the reply.

"He will be back soon, I think. I hope so, at least; I am always uneasy when he goes away, these are such troublous times."

There was an anxious look on the girl's face, and Dick did not fail to notice it.

"You are afraid your father may get into trouble? He must be a patriot, then."

The girl looked at Dick searchingly.

"Are—are you a patriot?" she asked.

"I am, miss!" replied Dick; "and I am proud to say it!"

"Oh, I am so glad!" the girl exclaimed. "Yes, father is a patriot, but the British soldiers and some of our neighbors have threatened to do him injury, and I am afraid something may happen to him."

"You have some Tory neighbors, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"So have my folks," said Dick, his face saddening; "a Tory murdered my father—shot him down in cold blood, right in front of our house, and before my mother's eyes!"

"Oh, how terrible!" said the girl, her voice trembling with sympathy, and her eyes filling with tears. Then she looked at Dick, with an eager light in her eyes, and asked:

"Where do your folks live, sir?"

"Near Tarrytown, miss," was the reply.

The girl looked more eager than ever.

"Is—is your name Slater?" she asked, timidly.

"Yes, miss; Dick Slater is my name."

"I heard about the murder of your father," the girl said;

"I heard father telling about it, and it made me more fearful on my own father's account."

"What is your name, miss, if I may ask?" asked Dick.

"Esther Morton, sir," with a blush.

It was evident that the girl was very favorably impressed by Dick's looks.

She was just at the age when girls fall in love easily, and as Dick was as handsome a young fellow as one would wish to see she would have been entirely excusable had she fallen in love with him.

Dick was very favorably impressed with Esther, too; but as for falling in love with her, he could not do that, as he was already in love with beautiful Alice Estabrook, Bob's sister.

Dick gave a start when he heard Esther's name.

"Have you a brother, Esther?" he asked.

"Yes, I have a brother Harry," was the reply.

"And he is the commander of a band of patriots?"

"Yes, sir——"

"Dick, Esther."

"Yes—Dick. He got a lot of the patriot men of the neighborhood to join with him, and they protect the homes of the patriots from the British and Tories."

"I met your brother this afternoon—only a couple of hours ago, in fact, Esther. We captured a band of red-coats, who were chasing me, and he and his men have gone with their prisoners to deliver them into the hands of General Washington at North Castle."

"Oh, I am so glad!"

This broke the ice, and the two were soon conversing as freely as though they had known each other for years.

While they were talking Esther was busying herself getting ready to cook some food for Dick.

She peeled and sliced potatoes and put them on the fire to cook, and she put some meat on also.

The odor of the cooking was very pleasing to Dick's olfactory nerves, for he was hungry, and it increased his hunger not a little.

Soon the meat and potatoes were done, and the girl set the table and placed the food on it. She covered the table with a neat, white spread, which Dick was sure was produced in his honor.

There was plenty of bread and butter and coffee in addition to the meat and potatoes, and Dick felt that he was to have a feast fit for a king.



He was just sitting down to the table, when the door suddenly and unceremoniously opened, and three men wearing the uniforms of British officers entered the cabin.

### CHAPTER III.

#### DICK'S PRESENCE OF MIND.

Esther uttered a little cry of fright, while Dick looked up at the men and quietly and coolly asked:

"How do you do, gentlemen? I see you are British officers, and as such you are welcome here. Sister and I are loyal to the king, and we are pleased to have you honor our humble home with your presence. What can we do for you, your excellencies?"

The youth rose from the table as he was speaking, and bowed low before the officers.

Dick had sized the three up instantly, when they entered the cabin.

He saw that they were officers whom he had never met, and he hoped that they were some who had never seen him when he had been in the British lines spying.

He would take chances on it, anyway.

His quickly conceived plan of passing himself and Esther off as brother and sister was a surprise to the girl, but she did not show it.

She was bright and quick-witted, and understood that Dick wished her to carry her part of the affair.

It was a serious matter to the youth.

He was caught in the cabin, and if he was to try to get away at once he would undoubtedly be run through with a sword or shot with a pistol, and he must bide his time.

One thing was sure, he was determined that the redcoats should not see the dispatch he was bearing to General Greene.

The officers did not seem to be at all suspicious that the youth was not what he professed to be.

"We would like to have something to eat," replied one.

"My sister will cook some food for you at once," said Dick.

"Yes, indeed!" said Esther; "I shall be glad to do so."

The officers seated themselves and waited, while the girl cooked a lot of meat and potatoes.

They conversed with one another in low tones.

Dick did not exactly like this, but he did not let on.

"Are there many rebels in this neighborhood?" presently asked one of the officers.

"Not such a great many," replied Dick. "The majority of the neighbors are loyal to the king."

"Let's see; what did you say your name was?" asked the redcoat, looking at Dick searchingly.

"Morton," replied Dick, "Harry Morton."

He had assumed the name of Esther's brother.

The officers looked at one another.

"Do you two constitute the entire family?" was next asked.

"No, sir; our father has gone to Tarrytown on business," replied Dick.

"Ah! when will he be back?"

"I don't know, sir; some time this evening, though."

The food was cooked by this time, and Esther placed it on the table.

She placed extra plates on the table, also, and the officers sat up to the table.

Dick, in order to keep up his character of a member of the household, did not sit down to the table, but the officers motioned for him to take his place.

"Sit up and eat with us," one said; "you were just about to eat as we arrived, so you must be hungry."

"I have been out hunting," said Dick, "and have had no dinner."

"We are out hunting, too, eh, fellows?" said the officer with a grin, and the other two nodded and laughed.

Dick knew what they meant—that they were hunting "rebels," as they called the patriots, but he did not let on.

The youth was skilled at disguising his true feelings.

He could make his face expressionless if he wished, and no one to look at his face as he sat there would have guessed that there was as shrewd a brain hard at work behind that mask as was possessed by any one.

Dick ate his meal quietly, and without any show of embarrassment or awe at being in such august company; yet at the same time he was very polite, and treated the redcoats with consideration.

Dick made up his mind, presently, that the officers did not suspect that he was not what he represented himself to be.

They talked too freely for that.

They even talked of the plan of campaign of the British army, so far as they knew it, and the youth learned that it was the intention of the British to try to capture Fort Washington at an early date.

At last the meal was ended, and just as they were about to get up from the table the door opened and a man entered.

Dick knew instinctively that the newcomer was Esther's father.



He met the issue squarely, by saying to the British officers:

"This is my father, your excellencies; father, these are some British officers who wished something to eat." The last to the newcomer, and Dick managed to give the man a significant look.

"Ah, yes," the man said; "glad to meet you, gentlemen, and glad if my children have been instrumental in catering to your comfort. All soldiers of the king's army are welcome beneath my humble roof."

Mr. Morton—for he it was—had taken his cue instantly.

"Thank you," said one of the officers; "it is good to find loyal people in this land that is so inhospitable."

At this moment the sound of footsteps was heard, and then the door opened once more, and two men in the uniform of British officers entered.

A glance Dick gave, and then his heart sank.

He knew he would be recognized, for one of the two was his old enemy Captain Frink!

The instant Captain Frink's eyes fell upon Dick, he paused, and a cry of surprise and joy escaped him.

"Seize that young scoundrel!" he cried; "he is Sam Sly, the rebel spy!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### OUT OF A TIGHT PLACE.

Dick's hands had dropped to the butts of his pistols as soon as he saw one of the newcomers was Captain Frink.

He now drew the pistols and fired point blank at the captain and his companion.

He did not fire to kill.

He would not have killed one of the fellows in the house before the eyes of the girl for anything.

He was a splendid shot.

He had practiced a great deal at odd times since the war began, and he could put a bullet pretty near wherever he wished it to go.

His aim was to disable the two.

One bullet took effect in Captain Frink's shoulder, the other striking the captain's companion in the arm.

Both uttered cries of pain.

Then Dick leaped forward, reversing the pistols as he did so in a dexterous manner.

With well-directed blows he knocked the two down.

Then with a cry of defiance he leaped through the open doorway.

The three officers who were in the cabin when Captain Frink and his companion arrived had been so paralyzed with astonishment that they had been unable to lift a hand to restrain the boy spy.

Consequently the youth had no difficulty in getting out of the cabin after removing the captain and his companion from his path.

As Dick emerged from the cabin he found himself confronted by half a dozen British troopers.

These fellows were startled, no doubt, both by the pistol shots and by Dick's sudden and unexpected appearance.

"Flee for your lives! cried Dick; "your commanders are both killed, and you will be if you remain here! The house is full of rebels!"

The troopers were frightened, and, acting on the impulse of the moment, they leaped upon their horses and rode away down the road at a gallop, looking back in a frightened manner.

Dick had scarcely expected the ruse to work, but it had done so, and he lost no time in darting around the corner of the house.

He was just in time to escape being seen by the three British officers with whom he had dined on such amicable terms.

They had recovered from their surprise, and, acting in response to instructions from Captain Frink, had rushed out to see if they could capture the daring youth who had fooled them so completely.

They paused as soon as they were outside, and listened.

The sound of the hoofbeats of the horses ridden by the fleeing troopers came to their ears.

They thought, of course, that it was made by the youth's horse.

Their own horses were hitched to trees near by.

They hastily untied the horses, leaped into the saddle, and rode away in pursuit of the troopers.

They plied whips and spurs, and rode as fast as they could.

They had good horses, and were confident they could overtake the fugitive.

They rode as fast as they could make their horses go, and at last they rounded a bend in the road and came in sight of the half dozen troopers.

To say the three officers were surprised is putting it mildly.

They did not know what to think.

They had supposed they were chasing the one youth, and now they found they were in pursuit of a half dozen British.



They could not understand it, but decided to have the mystery solved as quickly as possible.

They shouted to the men in front, and when the latter looked around they waved their hands for the fellows to stop.

The troopers, seeing that there were but three men after them, and that they wore the uniforms of British officers, stopped and waited for the others to come up with them.

When they did so, mutual explanations ensued, and it was an angry crowd that turned about and rode back toward the cabin they had just left in such haste.

## CHAPTER V.

### A QUICK FLIGHT.

Meantime Dick had not been idle.

He realized that unless something was done at once, Mr. Morton and Esther would be in serious trouble.

He supposed that Captain Frink would at once explain matters to the three officers, and that they would probably take the patriot and his daughter prisoners.

The youth was determined to stand by the two to the end.

He had got them into trouble; he would do all he could to get them out.

He paused when he got behind the cabin, and looked back around the corner.

He saw the three officers rush to their horses, untie them, mount and ride away.

"They think they are chasing me!" thought Dick; "good! now I shall have the opportunity of helping Mr. Morton and Esther out of their difficulty!"

As soon as the three had disappeared from sight, he walked around the cabin and re-entered it.

Captain Frink and his companion officer were seated on the floor, their backs against the wall, groaning with pain.

A curse escaped the captain as his eyes fell on Dick.

"You infernal young scoundrel!" he cried, and he attempted to draw a pistol with his left hand, with the evident intention of shooting the youth.

Dick stepped quickly forward and took the pistols out of the officer's belt. Then he did the same with the other officer.

"Now, I guess you will not do any one an injury," said Dick, coolly.

Then he turned to Mr. Morton and Esther.

"I fear I have got you into trouble," he said. "I am

very, very sorry; but I will do all I can to help get you out of the trouble. Those troopers will be back in a few minutes, hadn't we better be getting away from here?"

Mr. Morton looked at his daughter and nodded assent.

"I guess we had," he said; then he and his daughter hastily gathered up such articles of value as they possessed, as well as their extra clothing, and the three left the cabin, just in time to hear the clatter of the feet of approaching horses.

"They are coming!" said Dick; "we will have to hurry."

They made their way up the hill, and when they reached the stable, Dick said:

"I am not going to leave my horse. I would not take a thousands pounds in gold for him. You go on, and I will follow."

Dick hastened into the stable, untied the halter-strap, and led Major out.

He followed Mr. Morton and Esther, walking and leading Major.

He glanced back just after entering the timber, and saw the British troopers and the three officers ride up in front of the cabin in hot haste, and dismount.

"There'll be lively times in a few moments!" he thought. "Those fellows will try to follow us."

Dick soon overtook the patriot and his daughter, and at the same instant they heard wild shouts of anger from the rear.

"They'll be after us now!" said Mr. Morton.

"They won't be able to follow our trail," said Dick, "and I don't think they saw which way we came."

"Perhaps not; I hope not."

They hastened onward.

"Where will you two go?" asked Dick, presently.

"We will go to the home of a neighbor who is a true patriot," replied Mr. Morton. "We will remain there until the redcoat scoundrels have gone, and then return to our own home."

"To find it burned to the ground, I fear!" said Dick.

"Perhaps so."

"It is too bad that I happened along and caused you such serious trouble!" said Dick.

"Don't speak of it!" said Mr. Morton; "we are not complaining."

"You are not to blame," said Esther; "the British are to blame."

They walked onward through the timber.

Dick kept a sharp lookout behind.

He did not know but the redcoats might accidentally hit upon the right trail and succeed in following them.



"How far is it to the home of the neighbor you spoke of?" he asked, presently.

"About a mile further."

They walked as fast as they could, and twenty minutes later they came to the edge of a clearing in the midst of the timber.

They were just on the point of stepping out into the clearing, when Dick suddenly seized his companions and held them back, at the same time saying:

"Look! See the redcoats!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### A CLEVER RUSE.

In the middle of the clearing was a log house.

It faced the three.

In front of it were half a dozen British troopers.

As the three looked, they saw some more redcoats emerge from the cabin.

They had hold of a man who was struggling to free himself.

They were followed by a woman, who was weeping and wringing her hands.

"The scoundrels!" grated Mr. Morton, clenching his hands.

"They have found out that your neighbor is a patriot, and have made a prisoner of him," said Dick.

"Yes, and as like as not they'll shoot him in cold blood!"

"We must not allow it!" said Dick, quietly.

"I fear we cannot help ourselves. There must be a dozen of those fellows."

"There are that many, at least, but I think we can frighten them away."

"I wish that we might be able to do so!"

The three watched the scene for a few moments.

Then Dick drew his pistols.

"I can't stand it any longer," he said.

"It will be madness for us to attack them," said Mr. Morton.

"I'll tell you what we will do," said Dick; "you have your rifle and two pistols; I have four pistols. Now, you and Esther remain here. I will move along the edge of the timber, a distance of fifty yards or more; then I will fire a shot at the redcoats, run quickly halfway back here, fire another shot, run here, leave the two discharged pistols for you to load, first firing a shot from your rifle, and then I will run fifty yards in the other direction, fire a shot,

come back halfway and fire still another shot, and then when I reach here will fire again. You will have the pistols reloaded by that time, and I will take them, leave the others for you to reload and repeat the feat. In that way the redcoats will think there is a half dozen or more of us, and will, unless I mistake them mightily, mount and get away as rapidly as possible."

"It is a good plan," said Mr. Morton; "it may succeed. Try it at once."

"I will do so!"

Dick hastened away, and, a few moments later, a shot rang out from a short distance to the right; then another was heard, sounding much closer, and then Dick appeared, dropped the empty pistols, seized the rifle and fired another shot. Then he ran onward a distance of fifty yards, fired a shot, came back halfway, fired another shot and was back with his two friends so quickly as to surprise them.

The British troopers were evidently astonished and dismayed by the shots which had been fired at them from the different points in the edge of the timber.

They naturally thought that there were half a dozen of the enemy, at least. Two of their men had been struck by bullets and wounded, and this was discouraging. If they remained where they were, they felt that they would be picked off and shot down one by one.

So they assisted the two wounded men to mount their horses, and then they mounted in their turn and rode away at a gallop, disappearing in the timber at the opposite side of the clearing.

"Hurrah!" cried Dick; "the plan succeeded, didn't it!"

"It certainly did!" agreed Mr. Morton.

"It was a perfect success!" from Esther.

They now made their way across the open space to the house, where they were greeted joyfully by the man and his wife.

"Where are the rest of you?" Mr. Halsey asked.

"We are all here," Mr. Morton replied.

"But those shots—they were fired from half a dozen different points!"

"The shots were all fired by this young man!" said Mr. Morton, with a smile, and pointing to Dick.

Mr. Halsey looked puzzled.

"I don't understand how that could be," he said; "they were fired from a half dozen different points, and at short intervals. How could he have done it? He is not gifted with the ability of being in two places at the same time, is he?"

"No, but he can come as near it as anybody I have ever seen. He ran from one place to another between the shots."



"Remarkable!" exclaimed Mr. Halsey; "well, he fooled the redcoats nicely, for they evidently thought there was a half dozen firing upon them."

"To judge by the haste with which they got away from here, I should say you were right!"

Then Mr. Morton explained the presence of himself and daughter.

"I guess we will have to stay here with you to-night, Mr. Halsey," he said; "to-morrow we will be safe in returning to our home, I judge."

"Our home doesn't seem to be a safe refuge," said Mr. Halsey; "but you are welcome to stay as long as you like. The two of us will be able to offer fight, too, if we are attacked by the redcoats."

"I think you will be attacked within the hour," said Dick.

"Why so?" asked Mr. Morton in surprise.

"That gang we escaped from heard the firing, when I shot off the pistols at the redcoats awhile ago, and I have no doubt but that they are hastening in this direction now, as fast as they can come!"

Mrs. Halsey and Esther Morton turned pale.

"Goodness! I hope not!" quavered the former.

"And so do I!" said Esther, fearfully.

"There are only nine or ten of them," said Dick; "we three can drive them away easily."

"Oh, will you stay and help fight them!" cried Esther, with a look of delight.

"Yes, indeed, Esther!" said Dick; "you may be sure that, after getting you into this trouble, I will not go away and leave you to get out as best you may. I will not leave you until after I am reasonably sure that the redcoats have been driven away for good, and that they will not bother you any more."

Dick could see that all were pleased.

"You had better all go into the house," he advised; "I will take my horse to the stable, and will then join you, and we will get ready to repel the redcoats."

On second thought, Dick decided to take Major over into the timber, at the opposite side from the direction in which the redcoats would come, and hitch him there. He was afraid the redcoats would look in the stable and take Major away with them, and he would not know what to do without his horse.

So he led the horse across the open space to the edge of the timber and in a ways, and there tied him to a tree. Then patting Major's neck, the youth made his way back to the house.

Just as he stepped through the doorway, he happened

to glance backward over his shoulder, and saw eight or ten horsemen ride out of the timber into the clearing.

"The redcoats are here!" he said, quietly.

The two men leaped to his side, and peered out through the opening, Dick holding the door so that there was an opening of about six inches.

"There they are, sure enough!" exclaimed Mr. Morton.

"The redcoated scoundrels!" said Mr. Halsey, savagely.

His treatment at the hands of the other gang of redcoats was still fresh in his mind.

"We'll bar the door and go up into the loft," he went on. "From there we will have a splendid opportunity to take aim, and ought to be able to bring down a few of them!"

The door was closed and barred quickly, and then, leaving the woman and girl below, the men climbed up into the loft.

There were cracks between the logs, through which it would be an easy matter to fire, and the three felt that they would be able to easily hold their own against the ten men who were now advancing toward the house.

The British officers and troopers approached to within fifty feet of the house, and paused.

They talked among themselves for a few moments, and then one leaped to the ground and advanced toward the door.

"Halt!" cried Mr. Halsey, when the redecoat was within a dozen feet of the house; "come a step nearer, and you are a dead man!"

The fellow stopped at once and looked up toward the loft in a fearful manner.

"Go back, get on your horse, and the whole gang of you ride away from here and stay away, or it won't be good for you!" continued Mr. Halsey, in a fierce, threatening tone of voice. "Do you hear?"

The fellow evidently heard, for he looked very much frightened.

He hesitated, and then, turning, made his way back to where his companions were.

He talked with the others a few moments, and then one of the officers rode forward to within thirty feet of the house.

"Hello, the house!" he called.

"Well?" said Mr. Halsey, impatiently.

"I wish to speak to the owner of this house; is he in there?"

"I am he; go ahead."

"Very well; there is in your house at this moment a rebel spy; his name is Sam Sly, and there is a price on his head. If you will surrender the youth to us, we will take him and



go on our way without bothering you in any way. What do you say?"

"That there is no such person in here!"

"I know better!" was the reply; "Sam Sly, the boy spy, is in there, and we are going to have him out or know the reason why!"

"You are mistaken; there is no such person in this house."

The officer uttered an impatient exclamation.

"I know better!" he cried; "and it will be the better for you to give him up to us at once!"

"I'll tell you what you had better do!" said Mr. Halsey, in a threatening tone; "you had better get out of rifle shot of this house as quick as possible, for if you don't we will open fire upon you and kill every one of you! If you know when you are doing well you will go, and go at once!"

"What! ten of us retreat from one or two?" the officer cried, scornfully; "we will do nothing of the kind!"

"There are several of us in here," was the reply, "and we are all dead shots, and we are going to open fire right away. More, we will shoot to kill!"

"Then you refuse to deliver up that young spy?"

"I will deliver up no one!"

"So be it!" and with the words the officer turned his horse and rode back to his companions.

He began talking to his companions in an excited manner, and gestured at a great rate. Suddenly the crack of a pistol was heard, and the officer's arm dropped to his side, and he uttered a cry of pain and reeled in his saddle.

Mr. Halsey had fired, and the bullet from his pistol had broken the British officer's arm.

"Leave at once!" Mr. Halsey cried; "go away, or we will open fire—and next time the bullets will kill instead of maim!"

In response to this menace the redcoats leaped from their horses and rushed toward the front door of the house.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ON THE ROAD TO FORT WASHINGTON.

"Fire!" cried Dick; "give it to the scoundrels!"

The three fired at the same time and two of the advancing redcoats went down.

"Again!" cried Dick.

Once more the weapons rang out, and down dropped a couple of more of the redcoats.

This was too much for the rest.

They had not anticipated such deadly work from within the cabin.

Their courage failed them, and they turned and ran back toward their horses as fast as they could go.

Then they seemed to think of their companions who had fallen before the bullets of the defenders of the cabin, and the officer took a white handkerchief from his pocket, and advanced halfway to the cabin.

He waved the handkerchief, and those within the cabin understood that it was a flag of truce.

"We wish to remove our dead and wounded!" he called out; "may we do so without being fired upon?"

"Yes," replied Dick; "on condition that you leave here and stay away."

"I accept the condition," was the reply, and then several of the redcoats came and the four men who had fallen before the bullets of the defenders were taken away.

Only one had to be carried; the other three were not so badly wounded but what they could walk with assistance.

Ten minutes later the redcoats had disappeared in the timber and the three came down out of the loft.

"I am so glad you succeeded in driving them away!" said Esther.

"So are we glad!" smiled Dick.

"Do you think they will stay away?" asked Mrs. Halsey.

"I think so," Dick replied. "I believe that they have learned a lesson."

Nothing was taken for granted, however.

A sharp lookout was kept.

They did not know but the redcoats, after their fright wore off, might return and try to get revenge.

Daylight faded away, and darkness came over all, however, without any signs of the redcoats, and it was decided that they had given up all hope of capturing Dick, or trying to get revenge.

Dick remained and took supper with his newly-made friends, and then, when it was dark as it would be, he told them that he would have to be going.

"I must reach Fort Washington before morning," he said; "so I can't delay longer."

Dick saw a sober look settle over Esther's face.

"Won't it be very dangerous trying to reach there?" she asked; "won't you have to make your way through the lines of the British?"

"Yes," the youth replied. "It won't be the first time I have penetrated the British lines, however."

"But it will be very dangerous, I should think!" said Mrs. Halsey.



"Danger lurks everywhere, and lays in wait for everybody, these troublous times," replied Dick.

"Yes, that is true."

Dick bade them all good-by, shaking hands all around, and then, cautioning them to keep the door barred throughout the night, for fear the redcoats might return, he left the cabin.

He made his way toward the point where he had left Major tied.

Arriving there he found his faithful horse safe.

Dick patted Major on the neck, and the animal whinnied with pleasure.

"Good boy!" murmured Dick; "did you think I was not coming back?"

Dick untied the halter strap, climbed into the saddle, and rode slowly back across the opening.

He was within a hundred yards of the cabin, when Major suddenly sheered off to one side and gave utterance to a low snort of fear.

"I wonder what can have frightened Major?" the youth thought.

Then he brought his horse to a standstill.

Dick listened, straining his hearing to the utmost.

At first he could hear nothing.

Then he heard voices—or he thought it sounded like the voices of human beings.

The youth jumped to the conclusion at once that some of the redcoats had returned to try to get revenge for the setback which they had received at the cabin that evening.

Dick softly dismounted, and, leaving Major standing, stole forward.

He was soon close up to the owners of the voices.

There were, he judged, about four of the fellows.

He could not learn what their intentions were, for they stopped talking just as he got near enough to hear what was said, and they moved away in the direction of the cabin, as he could tell by the sound of their footsteps.

Dick followed them.

"They are up to some deviltry, I know," he said to himself; "and I will stay long enough to spoil their little game, whatever it is!"

The persons Dick were following did not pause until they reached the cabin.

Dick stopped a few yards away.

There was a whispered conference between the men, and then a rustling sound.

Next there was the sound of flint striking steel, and the youth knew what the scoundrels were intending to do:

They were going to set fire to the cabin.

"The cowardly hounds!" the youth said to himself, and he set his teeth and drew his pistols.

"I'll make them wish they had stayed away, and not tried any such infamous scheme!" was his mental decision.

The would-be incendiaries were in utter ignorance of Dick's presence.

They imagined they were working secretly, and no doubt thought they would give the inmates a surprise.

They little thought they were to be treated to a surprise.

Presently the sparks set fire to the little pile of dry leaves and tinder, and then the blaze grew and spread to a pile of dead branches of trees which had been brought and piled against the end of the cabin.

The reflection of the blaze revealed the men to Dick's view.

There were four of the fellows.

Dick had slipped back a distance of twenty-five or thirty yards.

Now he came running forward.

"Come on, fellows! we've got them now!" he cried. "Come on!"

Then he fired two shots at the four startled redcoats—for such Dick saw they were.

One of the bullets took effect, but not seriously enough to make the recipient unable to run, and the four fled into the darkness as fast as they could go, uttering cries of fright.

"After them!" cried Dick; "after them! Don't let the scoundrels get away!"

Then he kicked the fire in a dozen directions, and scattered it so that it could do no damage.

Then he walked around the corner of the cabin, just as the front door came open, and Mr. Morton and Mr. Halsey appeared there, rifles in hand.

"It's all over now!" said Dick, quietly.

"What, is it you, Dick?" cried Mr. Morton.

"As you see. Some fellows were trying to set fire to the cabin," he explained. "I stopped and put them to flight."

"Well, you are a great youth, if ever there was one!" said Mr. Halsey.

Esther's eager face now appeared in the doorway.

"Oh, Dick!" she cried; "and we owe still more to you, now!"

"You owe me nothing, Esther," the youth replied; "I owe you and your father considerable, for I was responsible for your being forced to leave your home."

"That is all right," said Mr. Morton.

"Indeed it is!" from Esther, and the light in her eyes showed that she meant what she said.

"I don't think those fellows will return to-night," said



Dick, "but they might. I think it will be well for you to take turns at keeping watch."

"We will do so," said Mr. Morton.

"Well, good-by, all," said Dick; "I guess I will get off this time. Take care of yourselves."

"We will; and you must take care of yourself."

"I will try to do so," and then Dick turned away.

He returned to where he had left Major, and found his faithful horse standing there.

"Good boy!" the youth murmured, patting the animal's neck.

Major whinnied gently, showing his appreciation of the kind words.

"This time we will go, old fellow," murmured Dick, and he rode slowly across the clearing, and entered the timber.

He did not know but he might run upon the redcoats, and kept one hand on the butt of a pistol.

He trusted to Major to apprise him of the presence of any one, however.

The horse would detect their presence before he could possibly do so.

"I guess I will make my way back to the road, by way of the home of Mr. Morton," thought Dick. "I hope the scoundrels didn't burn the house down; though I'm afraid they did."

Dick possessed the peculiar faculty of being able to keep going in a straight line in the dark, and, half an hour later, he reached the road at a point not more than two hundred yards from the home of Mr. Morton and Esther.

"I'll go slow and be careful," thought Dick; "there may be some redcoats around here. They might think that Mr. Morton and Esther would return and lie in wait for them."

Dick advanced slowly and carefully.

He heard no sound.

Seemingly there was no one in the vicinity.

But the youth was suspicious.

He knew the redcoats were tricky, as well as vicious and revengeful, as a general thing.

He felt sure that they would wish to capture the patriot and his daughter.

So it was reasonable to suppose that some of the redcoats would be in the vicinity.

He did not intend to let them capture him, however.

His mission was too important.

He did not intend to take any risks here, either.

He simply wished to see if the house had been burned.

Then, too, if there were redcoats hidden near he wished to locate them so as to be able to avoid them.

He had to get past the point in order to go onward on his journey toward Fort Washington.

Dick dismounted.

Then he stole forward, slowly and cautiously.

He was soon close to where the house would be if it was still standing.

He paused and listened.

He could not hear a sound.

Dick stole forward once more.

He made no more noise than a shadow.

Presently he reached the spot where the house had stood.

The house had been burned to the ground.

It was burned to ashes.

Dick could determine this by feeling about.

He could feel the ashes.

And they were still warm.

"The scoundrels!" Dick thought; "it is an outrage the way they do! Mr. Morton will have to rebuild."

A low murmur of voices came to Dick's ears.

The voices sounded from in the direction of the stable up the hillside.

"Ah! they are up there!" he thought; "they expect Mr. Morton to come back by the same route he used in going. Well, doubtless he will, but he won't be back to-night. Still he will probably return early in the morning, and will be captured if those fellows are allowed to remain here. Let's see; I must prevent that."

Dick pondered a few moments, and then a daring scheme entered his mind.

"I will get them to follow me!" he decided. "They can never catch Major, and if I can lead them several miles away from this spot, they will not, in all probability, return."

With Dick to decide was to act.

He moved rapidly but cautiously back up the road to where he had left his horse.

He mounted Major and rode slowly and carefully down the road, till he was opposite where the house had stood.

Then he brought Major to a standstill.

Dick listened intently.

He heard the murmur of voices, but very indistinctly.

He wished to attract the attention of the men who were talking without arousing their suspicions that he knew of their presence in the vicinity.

He knew how to do this.

Although Major was standing still, Dick said in a voice which, while it was seemingly intended to be low and cautious, was plenty loud enough to be heard some distance:



"Whoa, boy; stand here!"

The result was what Dick expected.

The murmur of the voices suddenly ceased.

"Stand still, I tell you!" said Dick.

Then he gently urged Major forward a distance of perhaps twenty feet.

Then he brought the horse to a halt once more, and listened.

"I'll wager those redcoats are slipping forward, in the expectation of taking some one by surprise!" thought Dick; "well, I'll move on a little bit further. I don't want them to get hold of me."

Again he started Major up, and this time he let the horse go fifty or sixty feet before stopping.

Again Dick listened, and, as before, all was silence.

He could hear nothing.

"I will hear from them soon, though," he thought; "they will make some kind of a to-do when they fail to find me where they are expecting to find me."

This proved to be the case.

Perhaps a minute passed.

Then Dick heard the low hum of excited voices.

The voices seemed to come from about the point where he had been when he first spoke out loud to attract the redcoats' attention.

They had reached the spot, and finding no one there they did not know what to think about it.

It was now time to attract the attention of the redcoats, and get them started in pursuit of him, and Dick said, speaking loud enough so that the redcoats could hear him:

"It was a false alarm, old fellow. There is nobody anywhere around here. Go on!"

Then Dick started Major forward at a gallop, so that the redcoats could hear the clatter of the hoofbeats.

"Halt! Hold on, there!" cried an imperious voice, from the rear; "stop! we are friends, and wish to talk to you!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SURPRISE AT THE TAVERN.

"I'll do nothing of the kind!" cried Dick, defiantly; "you can't fool me! You are redcoats, and want to capture me!"

Then came the crack! crack! of pistols, and Dick heard the peculiar, unpleasant whirl of one or two of the bullets.

"That's a game that two can play at!" he murmured, grimly, and drawing a pistol, he leveled it and fired.

A yell went up from the redcoats.

Dick had no idea that he had hit anyone, but the fact that he had fired at them had angered the redcoats, and the youth felt sure now that his plan would succeed, and that they would follow him in the hope of making a capture.

Dick was taking some chances in doing as he had done, but he felt that he owed Mr. Morton and Esther considerable, as he had been the means of getting them into trouble, and if he could draw the redcoats away from the home of his friends he felt that it was his duty to do so, even if it was attended with some danger to himself.

That part of it did not worry Dick, anyway.

He was utterly fearless.

He never thought of himself at all, and he would have enjoyed the adventure were it not that he was afraid that he might accidentally be captured and fail to reach Fort Washington with the dispatch to General Greene.

This would be terrible, as he was well aware that General Washington placed great confidence in him. If he was to fail he would never get over it, especially if it should be through doing something aside from the work of trying to get through the British lines.

Dick rode on, a distance of perhaps a hundred yards, at a gallop, and then slowed down to a walk.

He listened intently.

He wished to wait till the redcoats got mounted and started in pursuit before proceeding at speed, for fear they might get discouraged and remain behind and wait for the coming of Mr. Morton after all.

Presently he heard the sound of hoofbeats.

The redcoats had mounted, and were coming in pursuit.

"Good!" murmured the youth; "now we will give them a merry chase!"

Dick felt sure that Major could pull away from the horses of the pursuing redcoats, but he did not wish to do this, so he kept Major down to a moderate gait.

He kept his head turned sidewise so as to listen, and he regulated the speed of his horse by the sound of the hoofbeats of the horses coming behind him. If the hoofbeats grew loud he would let Major out a bit, and draw a little further away from the pursuers.

Of course, the redcoats supposed the person they were chasing was making his horse go at its best gait, and they imagined that they would soon overhaul the fugitive.

This was just what Dick wished them to think.

After they had left the home of Mr. Morton three or four miles behind, then he would show the redcoats a thing or two.

He would speedily undeceive them.



It was very dark.

Dick let Major choose his course.

Horses can see to keep a road the darkest kind of a night.

So the horse kept to the road now, without difficulty, seemingly.

On they went.

And behind them came the pursuing redcoats.

One mile was traversed in quick time.

Then another, and still another.

"I'll wait till I get further before giving them the slip," thought Dick; "there is no hurry."

So the chase went on.

The redcoats were no doubt beginning to get impatient.

They began firing into the darkness in front of them.

They thought they might accidentally hit the fugitive, and bring his flight to a sudden termination.

"I don't like that!" thought Dick; "a bullet might accidentally hit me, and then it would be all up with me, and Fort Washington would be captured by the British. I guess I will pull away and leave those fellows."

Dick urged Major to a faster pace.

The horse responded nobly.

It was soon evident that he was leaving the other horses behind.

The hoofbeats became more and more indistinct to the hearing.

The crack! crack! of the pistols did not sound loud any more.

"I'm leaving them behind," thought Dick. "They are out of pistol shot now."

Dick was sure that he could easily escape his pursuers.

He felt no fear of being captured by them now.

He patted Major's neck.

"Good boy! you've left them away behind!" he said; "we are all right now!"

A few moments later Major galloped around a bend in the road, and before Dick realized where he was they were in front of a roadside tavern, or inn.

And in front of the inn, engaged in drinking wine, was a company of British soldiers.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THROUGH MANY DANGERS.

The landlord of the inn had torches stuck up outside, and the torches made everything almost as light as day.

The redcoats saw Dick at the same instant that he saw them.

They dropped their glasses and seized their muskets.

The commander drew and waved his sword.

"Halt!" he cried; "halt! in the name of the king!"

But Dick was not in a mood for halting in the name of the king or any one else.

He knew that if he stopped he would be searched, and the dispatch would be found and read.

Thus some of the secrets of the commander-in-chief of the Continental army would become known to the British.

This would give them an opportunity to do considerable harm.

Dick was determined that the redcoats should not read the dispatch.

He would die, if necessary, in trying to keep them from doing so.

Knowing that if he guided his horse past and continued onward the redcoats would fire a volley, and that some of the bullets would hit him, Dick instantly decided upon a bold stroke.

He turned Major's head and rode straight toward the redcoats.

He pulled a pistol out of his belt and fired at the officer.

Then he uttered a wild shout and pulled up on Major's bits, at the same time using the spurs.

The result was that the horse leaped and bounded about, knocking several of the redcoats down and trampling on them.

The actions of the horse frightened the soldiers, and, instead of firing upon the rider, they began a wild scramble to try to get out of the way of the horse.

And just at this moment, when he had the redcoats in confusion, Dick pulled the horse's head around, put the spurs to him, and rode away up the road like the wind.

A few of the redcoats fired shots after the daring youth, but the soldiers were excited and did not aim, and the bullets went wild.

Dick uttered a defiant yell, and the next instant he was out of sight in the darkness.

"Phew!" he whistled; "that was lively while it lasted! I thought at first that I was a goner!"

Then he patted Major's neck.

"Good boy!" he said; "it is too bad that I had to use the spurs on you, old fellow; but I had to do it or lose my life."

Dick slowed Major down to a steady gallop presently, and went on his way feeling in good spirits.



"I have had plenty of adventure since leaving North Castle," he said to himself; "but I have come through all in good shape, and I hope to reach Fort Washington in safety."

Dick kept on for perhaps fifteen minutes, and then he brought Major to a stop, and, turning in his saddle, listened intently.

Behind him he heard the sound of hoofbeats.

"Those fellows are still following me," he thought; "and perhaps some of the redcoats who were at the tavern have joined them. Well, let them come; they can't catch me!"

He rode onward, urging his horse to a little faster pace.

An hour later, as Dick emerged from the timber, and came out on a sort of bluff which was at the edge of a basin perhaps a mile across, he saw dozens of campfires burning below him.

Dick was familiar enough with the country hereabouts to know where he was.

He remembered seeing the basin in daylight, when the Continental army was retreating from Harlem Heights, nearly a month before.

"That is the main force of the British!" said Dick to himself; "and they are camped here, awaiting orders to march on Fort Washington, which is about four miles from here. I must get around the army in some manner."

Dick decided to turn to the right and follow along the top of the bluff a mile or so, and then cross the basin and continue his journey. To try to cross here would be madness. He could not hope to escape capture.

Dick left the road, which here led down into the basin, and made his way through the timber.

It was slow work.

It was dark, and Major had to literally feel his way.

The branches of the trees struck the youth in the face, and he presently dismounted and walked and led the horse.

In this way they got along fairly well.

Dick decided that they had gone far enough in this direction, at last.

Then he led Major down the bluff, which was here more of a slope, and mounting rode away across the basin.

The campfires of the British were to the left now.

They were far enough away so that Dick did not feel afraid of being seen by any of the sentinels, but he thought it proper to exercise caution.

So he rode slowly, and was on the alert and ready for anything.

Presently he was across the basin.

He ascended the slope at the other side.

He cut across through the timber, going diagonally, and fifteen minutes later reached the road.

"I don't know whether there will be guards on this road or not," thought Dick; "but I will have to risk it."

He proceeded slowly and carefully, however.

He knew he was right in the most dangerous part of his journey.

He had gone perhaps half a mile and was beginning to feel secure.

"I guess I am all right now," he thought; "I don't think there is any danger of running onto any of the redcoats."

At this instant came the challenge from in front and slightly to the left:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

## CHAPTER X.

### DICK OVERHEARS AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION.

"That's the way!" was the thought that flashed through Dick's mind; "just when one thinks he is safest is when he is in the most danger!"

Dick's mind was very active.

He thought as above, and at the same time was considering his chances for escape, and questioning himself as to what was his best course to pursue.

Major was going at a walk when Dick was challenged.

Had he been going at a gallop Dick would have rode right onward and risked the British bullets, but it would take time to get his horse started, and he might fall with half a dozen bullets in him if he was to try that right now.

So he made a virtue of necessity, and answered the challenge by saying:

"A friend!"

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign!" cried the voice.

"Coming!" replied Dick.

As he spoke he leaped lightly to the ground.

He clucked to Major to go on, and the intelligent animal kept right on going.

Dick stole softly away to one side and entered the timber beside the road.

Then he uttered a peculiar whistle.

It was a signal he taught Major to obey.

And Major obeyed it now, instantly.

The noble animal uttered a whinny.

This was as much as to say to his young master: "I am coming!"



"He's coming!" murmured Dick; "now, if those red-coats don't shoot him!"

Dick hastened away through the timber, uttering another whistle as he did so.

Major whinnied again in reply.

Then the crack of a musket was heard.

"The scoundrel!" thought Dick; "I hope he didn't hit Major!"

Dick whistled again.

There came the answering whinny, and Dick's heart leaped with delight.

"Major is safe!" he said to himself.

Then he paused and waited till the horse overtook him.

Dick patted the intelligent animal on the neck.

"Good boy!" he murmured, and the horse whinnied, but in a lower key. He seemed to realize that his young master desired as little noise as possible.

"Come!" said Dick, and he hastened away through the timber, the horse following.

The sentinel who had challenged Dick, and then fired upon the horse, had awakened to the fact that the person he had challenged was escaping from him, and he was making a big to-do over it.

"That's all right," murmured Dick; "go ahead and make all the noise you want. I don't think you will get me this time!"

Dick made a wide circuit and reached the road half a mile beyond the point where he had been challenged.

He listened a few moments, and, hearing nothing, mounted Major and rode onward.

Dick was following the old Post road.

He knew that the road led to a bridge which crossed Spuyten Duyvil Creek at the north end of Manhattan Island.

The youth was sure that this bridge, if it had not been destroyed, would be closely watched by the redcoats.

As he approached the vicinity of this bridge he pondered the situation.

Should he try to cross the bridge?

He feared it would be very dangerous.

If the bridge was watched—and he felt sure it was—he could scarcely hope to get across without being captured.

He decided finally to make a detour to the right, and strike the creek a quarter of a mile above the bridge.

Then he would ford the stream; or, if necessary, Major could swim it.

Dick knew Major was a good swimmer, for the horse had once swam the East River, where it was a mile wide, at least.

"I guess he will be able to get across Spuyten Duyvil Creek, all right!" thought Dick.

When he was within, as near as he could judge, half a mile of the bridge, he guided Major into the timber and went in a circuitous manner a distance of nearly a mile.

Then, as he had figured, they came to the creek.

Dick was on the point of riding into the stream when he heard voices.

The voices were of two men engaged in conversation, and the men were approaching the spot where Dick was.

At first he thought of moving away.

Then, fearing this would attract the attention of the newcomers, he decided to remain where he was.

The men could not see him, and he might escape detection.

The owners of the voices approached to within twenty feet of Dick and paused, as he could determine by the sound.

Dick listened to the conversation of the men with interest.

They were redcoats.

This much he quickly learned.

More, they were spies.

They were even now going upon a spying expedition.

Their objective point was Fort Washington.

"I think you are very foolish to attempt it," Dick heard one man say.

"I don't," was the reply.

"Well, I do; you will be discovered and captured; then—you know what will happen then."

"Oh, yes; I know what will happen if I am caught; but I don't intend to allow myself to be caught."

"They will catch you just the same; I would wager that they will!"

"You would lose. The rebels are not smart enough to capture Ralph Marsten, the British spy!"

There was considerable bravado in the man's tone.

Dick noticed this.

He made a mental note of the man's name.

"Ralph Marsten, eh?" he said to himself; "well, Mr. Marsten, if you show up in Fort Washington while I am there, I shall do my best to show you that the rebels are smart enough to capture you or any other British spy!"

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," said the other man, who was evidently of a more careful, conservative temperament; "those rebels are not fools, by any means."

"Oh, that's all right; I am going into Fort Washington and I am coming out again safely."

"I hope you may, Marsten."

"You are dubious, eh?"



"I must acknowledge that I think the feat you are thinking of attempting is foolhardy."

"I don't so consider it."

"You will before you get through with it, however; I would wager something on that."

"You wouldn't win anything on that proposition."

"I'm not so sure of it."

"I am; but let's be moving on."

"All right."

Then the owners of the voices moved away.

Dick drew a breath of relief when he could hear their voices no longer.

"There; that danger is past," he murmured; "not that I think those two fellows could have captured me, but I dislike having to injure or kill men. I am glad they did not discover my presence, which would have caused a collision between us."

Dick urged Major into the creek.

The horse obeyed the command of his young master without hesitation.

He entered the water and waded toward the other shore.

At a point near the centre of the stream, for a distance of perhaps twenty feet, Major had to swim. The rest of the way he waded.

They were soon on the other side.

Then Dick made a circuit, and finally reached the Post road.

He followed the road southward.

He was soon on Harlem Heights.

The Continental army had been stationed here quite awhile a few weeks before, and Dick was familiar with the lay of the land.

He knew that he was within a mile of Fort Washington.

He had had a number of adventures, but felt that now he was reasonably safe.

He was sure that he had passed all the British outposts and picket lines.

The next time he was challenged, it would be by an American sentinel, he felt sure.

He hoped so, anyway.

He was tired of being challenged by redcoats.

It would be a welcome change to be challenged by an American soldier.

Twenty minutes later Dick was challenged, sure enough.

It may have been imagination, but Dick imagined he could discern a difference in the tone of the sentry's voice—a difference from that of the British sentries.

It sounded to Dick's ears more manly, more ringing.

In answer to the "Who comes there?" Dick replied: "A friend."

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign!" was the command, and Dick rode forward without hesitation.

Dick knew he was within pistol shot of Fort Washington.

So he knew the sentinel was a patriot soldier.

It could not be otherwise.

Consequently when he was close upon the sentry, he said:

"I am a patriot spy. I have come straight from the headquarters of the patriot army at North Castle, and have dispatches from the commander-in-chief to General Greene."

"Come with me," said the sentry.

He led the way to where the officer of the guard was, and turned Dick over to him.

Dick gave Major into the hands of a soldier, with instructions to feed him, and then he followed the officer of the guard.

They were soon within the fort.

"You say you are from the commander-in-chief?" asked the officer.

"Yes; with dispatches for General Greene."

"General Greene is not here. His headquarters are at Fort Lee."

"That is across the river, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then I must cross the river at once!"

"It is important that the dispatches be delivered to-night, then?"

"I promised the commander-in-chief to deliver them at the earliest possible moment."

"Then you had better cross over at once."

"Yes; how will I accomplish it? Have you a boat?"

"Yes. I will send a couple of men with you who will row you across."

"Very well; that will do nicely."

The two men were soon ready.

Dick accompanied them down to the river.

They led the way to where there was a boat.

All three got in.

The two men seized the oars, and, pushing off, started to row across the Hudson.

The moon had risen a short time before, and now it was possible to see objects at a short distance.

They had gone perhaps two hundred yards when one of the oarsmen uttered an exclamation.

"A boat is following us!" he said in an excited tone.

Dick's back was toward the stern, and he turned and looked.

Sure enough, there was a boat.



It was a much larger boat than the one Dick and his two companions were in.

And it had eight or ten men in it.

"What do you think?—are they friends or foes?" asked Dick.

"I am afraid they are foes," was the reply. "I fear the boat is from one of the British warships which are anchored down below."

"Row, then! Row as hard as you can!" said Dick; "we must not let them overhaul us!"

"That's right!" and the two bent to the oars, and rowed with all their might.

The other boat was evidently in pursuit.

The occupants made no noise or demonstration of any kind.

They simply rowed as hard as they could.

It was their evident intention to overhaul the boat if possible.

Dick watched the pursuing boat closely.

He wished to see whether or not it was gaining.

He soon made up his mind that it was.

"Pull, boys!" he said; "those fellows are lessening the distance between the boats!"

"We're doing all we can," was the reply. "Do you think they are gaining fast enough so that they will overtake us before we can get across?"

"It is hard to say," was the reply; "perhaps not."

Evidently the oarsmen in the pursuing boat were being urged to do their utmost also, for the boat began creeping up on the boat in front surely and steadily.

Dick looked across toward the farther shore.

"It will be a close race!" he thought.

"Stop!" called a loud and threatening voice; "stop! in the name of the king!"

"We don't care anything about your king!" called back Dick, defiantly. "We'll stop when we get ready, and not before!"

"Stop, or we will fire!" came the cry in an angry tone.

"That's a game two can play!" retorted Dick. "I should advise you to hold your fire!"

"I'll show you, you saucy rebel!" cried the man, and then Dick saw the glimmer of steel.

The redcoat had drawn his pistol, and was going to fire.

were below the level of the gunwale, and Dick bent forward also.

Crack! went the pistol.

The bullet struck the boat, but did no damage.

Dick drew a pistol.

"I'll see what I can do in that line!" he said, grimly. "I don't fancy this kind of work, but they have set the fashion and I must follow it!"

Dick leveled the weapon, and, taking aim, fired.

Crack! went the weapon, and a yell of pain came from one of the men in the pursuing boat.

"Good! you hit one of them!" said one of Dick's companions. "Give them another shot!"

"I'll wait and see whether they try another shot at us or not," said Dick. "I don't wish to wound or kill any one ruthlessly and uselessly."

"There isn't any use of wasting any sentiment on those fellows," the oarsman declared; "they won't waste any on you."

"I'll wait, anyway."

The man who had fired the other shot, now leveled another pistol, and again Dick and his companions bent low.

The bullet flew wide this time, and Dick called out:

"You had better go off somewhere and put in a month or two practicing! Come to me for your lessons. See; this is the way to shoot!"

Then Dick leveled another pistol, took quick aim, and fired.

A cry of pain followed the shot.

It was evident that the bullet had found lodgment in the body of one of the men in the boat.

"Every time you shoot, I'll shoot!" called out Dick; "so if you wish to keep from being killed or crippled, you had better stop shooting in this direction."

Evidently the redcoat thought this was good advice, for he did not fire again.

The oarsmen worked harder than ever, however. They knew that if they could get to close quarters, they would be able to overpower and capture the three.

The two oarsmen in Dick's boat worked harder, too, however, and the redcoats did not gain very rapidly.

"I think we'll reach the shore before they succeed in getting anywhere near us," said Dick. "They won't dare follow us clear to the river bank, anyway, will they?"

"I should think not."

This proved to be the case.

When the boat was within two hundred yards of the shore the other boat ceased following.

The men rested on their oars a few moments, and then headed around in the other direction.

## CHAPTER XI.

DICK AND GENERAL GREENE.

"He is going to fire!" said Dick; "stoop down!"

The two oarsmen bent forward till their heads and backs



"They've given it up as a bad job," said Dick.

"Yes; they're going back."

The boat soon reached the shore, and Dick and his companions leaped out.

"Are you going back?" asked one of the two men.

"I can't say now," Dick replied; "you stay here, however, and if I am not to return to-night, I will come back and let you know, or send you word."

"All right."

Dick made his way up to the fort.

He had the countersign, and, on being challenged, gave it.

He was allowed to enter the fort.

He asked to be conducted to the headquarters of General Greene.

"General Greene is in his room asleep," was the reply of the officer on guard; "you will have to wait till morning if you wish to see him. Won't some other officer do as well?"

"No," replied Dick, quietly; "I am direct from North Castle, and have important dispatches from the commander-in-chief, who instructed me to place them in the hands of General Green at the earliest possible moment."

"Do you mean to say you have come from North Castle to-night?"

The officer of the guard looked at Dick in amazement.

"Well, I left there yesterday forenoon; but I had to wait till night to complete the last half of the journey, as the road was infested by the redcoats, who would have gobbled me up in daylight."

"And didn't you run onto any of them to-night?"

"Oh, yes; quite a number."

"But you got through, anyway! I don't see how you did it!"

"It took considerable dodging," smiled Dick.

"I should think it would have!"

"Yes; and now I wish you would show me to General Greene's headquarters."

"This way; he has his headquarters in that house yonder."

A short distance away stood an old-fashioned country farmhouse.

The officer of the guard led the way toward it.

They ascended a series of steps leading to a balcony, which was on a level with the floor of the second story.

The guard knocked at a door.

It was opened by an orderly.

"Here is a bearer of dispatches," said the guard.

"Who are the dispatches for?" was asked.

"For General Greene," replied Dick.

"Who are they from?"

"From the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental army."

The orderly started and looked suspiciously at Dick.

"The commander-in-chief is at North Castle, thirty miles from here," he said.

"I am aware of it," said Dick, coldly; "I have just come from there."

"You have just come from North Castle?"

"I have."

Dick's tone was cold.

He did not fancy the role the orderly was assuming.

He was making himself altogether too important, Dick thought.

"How did you manage to get through the British lines?"

"I am not here to talk of that," said Dick; "I got through, and that is sufficient. I wish to see General Greene."

"He is asleep, and I don't think he would care to be disturbed."

"I will take the responsibility," said Dick; "I have dispatches for him, from the commander-in-chief, and I was instructed to place the papers in General Greene's hands at the earliest possible moment."

The orderly was somewhat taken aback.

He hesitated.

Then he seemed to come to the conclusion that it would not do to put Dick off, for he said:

"Come in; I will awaken the general."

The officer of the guard turned away to return to his post, and Dick entered the house.

The room Dick was ushered into was lighted by a couple of candles.

"Be seated," said the orderly.

Dick sat down.

The orderly left the room.

He was gone perhaps ten minutes.

Then he returned.

He looked somewhat subdued and more pleasant.

"The general will see you at once," he said.

He led the way out of the room, along a hall, and, opening a door at the end of the hall, ushered Dick into a good-sized room, saying:

"Here is the young gentleman, General Greene."

General Green rose and extended his hand to Dick.

"I am glad to see you, Dick, my boy!" he said. "As soon as my orderly told me a young man was out there with



dispatches from the commander-in-chief, I knew at once that it was you."

Dick drew the papers out of his pocket, and extended them to the general.

"Here are the dispatches, general," he said.

The general took them eagerly.

"Sit down, Dick," he said; "excuse me, while I read the dispatches."

"Certainly," said Dick, and he took a seat and waited for the general to read the dispatches.

General Greene read the papers through, and then sat for several minutes gazing at the floor.

His brows were knitted.

He was evidently pondering some important matter.

Presently he looked up, and his eyes fell on Dick.

His face lighted up.

"Dick," he said; "I am in a quandary."

"Yes?"

Dick's tone was politely inquiring.

"I am free to admit, Dick, that I don't know what to do. In these dispatches that you have just brought, the commander-in-chief instructs me to evacuate Fort Washington, and to make arrangements to evacuate Fort Lee also, as he fears they will be attacked soon by the British, and the American forces be either badly decimated or captured."

"I was aware of the nature of the contents of the dispatches, sir," said Dick; "the commander-in-chief told me, as I was to destroy them if close-pressed by the British in coming here, and in that case I was to tell you the contents."

"I see; well, I will tell you something else, Dick. I have within the past twenty-four hours received orders from Congress to not abandon Fort Washington, save under the direst extremity. So you can now readily see what a quandary I am in. Shall I obey the orders of the commander-in-chief or those of Congress—which?"

Dick regarded the general intently, an interested light in his eyes.

"You are certainly in a very difficult and puzzling position," he said.

"I am, Dick, and as I have said, I don't know what to do!"

Dick was silent.

General Greene opened the dispatches from General Washington and read them again, slowly and carefully.

Then he pondered a while longer.

After this he went to a desk and took a folded document from a drawer.

He came and handed this to Dick.

"Read it," he said.

Dick opened the document.

A glance showed him it was from the Continental Congress.

The youth read the document from beginning to end.

It was not long, but was explicit.

It stated decidedly that Fort Washington was to be evacuated only under circumstances which made it absolutely necessary.

When Dick had finished reading, he folded the document and handed it back to the general.

"You see what it says?" the general remarked.

"Yes, sir," Dick replied.

"It says I am to hold Fort Washington until forced to evacuate."

Dick nodded.

"So it does," he coincided.

The general looked at the youth keenly.

"Would you consider that it was absolutely necessary for the safety of the garrison, to evacuate Fort Washington?" he asked.

Dick hesitated.

"Go on; say what you are thinking," urged General Greene.

He was a shrewd man, and was one who well knew that it was possible to get good ideas or pointers from his men occasionally.

"The thoughts, which have been going through my mind are hardly clearly defined, General Greene," he said; "perhaps I can express them in a few words, however."

"Do so."

"Well, then, I will say that I have the utmost confidence in the judgment of the commander-in-chief. To my mind he, better than the members of Congress, knows what is best to do; he is on the ground, knows what is going on, and what the enemy is likely to do, and I should say that it would be a hard matter to disregard his orders; then, to it is a serious matter to disregard the order of Congress."

"You are right, Dick; I am in a quandary. I think I shall sleep over it, and decide in the morning. Will you remain here, Dick?"

"Just as you say."

"Very well, remain here, then. There is a vacant room. I may have some work for you in the morning."

"Very well, sir; I will send word to the boatmen who brought me over that I am not going back to-night, so that they will not wait longer for me."

Then Dick saluted and withdrew.



## CHAPTER XII.

## THE BRITISH SPY.

"Well, Dick, I have made a decision."

"Have you, General Greene?"

"Yes."

Dick Slater, the patriot boy spy, had been invited to take breakfast with General Greene.

They were now engaged in disposing of the morning meal.

General Greene looked at Dick, a reflective expression in his eyes.

The general was silent for a few moments, and then he went on:

"I have decided to hold Fort Washington as long as possible."

"Well, I hope you will be able to hold it as long as you wish to do so, sir!" said Dick.

"I believe I can hold it. I shall reinforce the garrison as soon as the troops arrive at Hackensack."

"There is bound to be some fighting at Fort Washington, then, isn't there?" remarked Dick.

"Yes; I have no doubt that the British will try to storm the fort, but I do not believe they will be able to capture it."

"General Greene, I am going to ask a favor," said Dick.

"Ask it, my boy," with a smile.

"Among the troops that are coming to Hackensack is my company of 'Liberty Boys.' I wish that this company may be among the troops chosen to reinforce Fort Washington."

"Your desire shall be gratified, my boy! But I should think you would wish to stay away from the fort. There will be some hard fighting."

"That is the reason I wish them to be among the troops chosen to go to the fort. The boys are never so happy as when they are in a battle and in the front rank."

"That is greatly to their credit," said the general. "They shall be among the troops chosen."

"Thank you, sir."

After breakfast Dick asked General Greene if there was anything special he wished him to do.

"Nothing at present, my boy," was the reply.

"Very well; then I will cross over to Fort Washington and see how my horse is getting along. He is a noble animal, and I want to be sure that he is well taken care of."

A few minutes later Dick left Fort Lee and made his way down to the river bank.

There were a number of boats there, and Dick selected the smallest one, and, getting in, rowed across the river.

Leaping ashore he tied the painter to a tree and made his way up the bluff to Fort Washington.

Dick made his way to where Major was standing tied to a tree, and he found that the horse had been fed.

Dick patted Major on the neck and spoke to him, and Major whinnied.

"Good boy!" said Dick; "you are a horse worth having!"

He patted the horse's neck again, and was turning away, when a man who was standing near, looking at Major critically, said:

"That's a fine horse, young fellow; where did you get hold of him?"

Dick almost gave a start.

Where had he heard that voice before?

It sounded very familiar; yet he was sure he had never seen the man before.

Dick eyed the man closely without seeming to do so.

He did not like the fellow's looks.

"Yes, he's a fine horse," said Dick, coldly; "I have had him quite a while."

"That so?" with a smile that was intended to be engaging, but which to Dick's keen eyes looked more like a leer; "captured him from the redcoats, perhaps? The boys say you are a spy, and one of the best in the army."

"Which army?" asked Dick, quickly, and with a searching look that caused the fellow to shift his position and look slightly uncomfortable, Dick thought.

"Why, the—the patriot army, of course," the fellow said, quickly. "A British spy wouldn't be likely to be here—would he?"

There was such a peculiar look in the fellow's eyes that it attracted Dick's attention, and he looked at the man searchingly; and then, at the same instant it flashed into his mind where he had heard the man's voice.

It was the night before, at Spuyten Duyvil Creek, when he had overheard the two British spies talking.

This was the spy who had said he was going to enter Fort Washington.

With the leap of a panther Dick sprang forward and seized the fellow by the throat.

"I have you now, Ralph Marsten, British spy!" the youth cried. "You are my prisoner!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ANOTHER SPY CAPTURED.

The fellow was taken by surprise.

But he struggled hard to wrench himself free from Dick's grasp.



He was a powerful man, and would have got free from many persons.

But not from Dick.

The youth was almost as strong as two ordinary men.

Then, too, he had secured his favorite hold—the throat hold.

No living person could long withstand the terrible pressure of Dick's steel-like fingers.

The spy could not get his breath.

He struggled and gasped.

He caught hold of Dick's hands with his own hands, and tried to tear the youth's fingers loose.

In vain.

He could not do it.

He grew red in the face; then black.

Presently he sank to the ground unconscious.

Just then a number of soldiers came running up.

"What is the trouble?" cried a sergeant. "What is the matter with this man?" pointing to the insensible spy.

"The matter is that he is a British spy," said Dick, quietly.

"A British spy!"

"Exactly."

Dick's tone and air were cool and convincing.

"How do you know this?" asked the sergeant.

"Last night as I was coming here, I heard this man and another talking together up by Spuyten Duyvil Creek. They were spies, and one said he was going to enter Fort Washington before morning. I was close to them and heard their voices plainly, and as soon as I heard this man's voice a minute ago I recognized it. He is the British spy who said he was going to enter the fort."

A murmur of amazement went up from the soldiers.

This was succeeded by anger.

"Let's string the scoundrel up to a tree as soon as he comes to!" said one.

"That's right!"

"Yes; let's hang the spy!"

"Show the scoundrel no mercy!"

"He deserves death!"

Such were the cries, but Dick shook his head and turned to the sergeant.

"Sergeant," he said, "you had better make the fellow a prisoner, and confine him in the guardhouse. Then report his capture to the commanding officer."

"That will be the best thing to do, I suppose," the sergeant said, and then, as the spy showed signs of returning consciousness, a rope was procured, and his hands tied together behind his back.

By the time this was accomplished the spy had regained

consciousness, and when he found that his hands were tied he became wildly angry.

He raved and threatened.

Then, finding this had no effect, he began begging and pleading innocence of the charge of being a spy.

"I'm a patriot," he declared; "and this is all a mistake. Untie my hands and set me free!"

"It won't do, Ralph Marsten!" said Dick, sternly; "your days are known, and your days as a spy are numbered, your usefulness to the British cause is at an end."

The fellow turned pale.

He began to realize now that he was in a tight place.

He kept on pleading his innocence, however, and begged to be released, but was marched off to the guardhouse instead.

Then the sergeant went to Colonel Magaw, the officer in charge of the fort, and reported the capture of the spy.

Colonel Magaw was somewhat surprised to think that a British spy had been within the fort, but was glad he had been captured.

When he learned that Dick was responsible for the capture of the spy, he congratulated the youth in decided terms.

Dick received the praise modestly, and then said:

"I think we can capture his companion, colonel. I know where he will likely be to-night, waiting for the fellow we have just captured to return. If you say so I will take three or four men and go there and capture the other spy."

"Very well; do so, Dick," said the colonel; "the spies are more dangerous than ten times their number of ordinary soldiers, and I think it good policy to capture as many of them as possible."

"So do I," said Dick; "I will see if I can capture the other fellow to-night."

As soon as it was dark, Dick, accompanied by four soldiers, set out.

They made their way northward along the Kingsbridge road, until they were close to the bridge across Spuyten Duyvil Creek.

Then they paused and listened awhile before proceeding further.

Hearing nothing they moved forward once more, going very slowly.

When they were within perhaps fifty yards of the bridge they were called by some one from the timber at the side of the road.

"Is that you, Marsten?" the person asked.

Dick knew it was the other spy.

The question asked told him that.



The youth was good at imitating voices.

"Yes, it is me, Marsten," he replied in a capital imitation of the captured spy's voice.

"Good!" was the remark from the spy; "I hardly expected that you would get back."

"Well, you see you were wrong."

"Yes." Then footsteps were heard approaching.

A few moments later the faint outlines of a human form were visible, and as soon as the fellow was within reach Dick leaped upon him.

The youth's companions leaped to his aid also, and they had made the spy a prisoner almost before he knew what was taking place.

They promptly gagged the fellow to keep him from making an outcry, and then set out on the return to the fort.

Colonel Magaw was delighted when they appeared with the prisoner in their midst.

He complimented them on their prompt and good work.

The spy was taken to the guardhouse and placed in the room with his brother spy.

They pretended that they did not know each other, but Dick noted the look on their faces, and saw that they knew each other only too well.

"Let me give you a bit of advice," he said, quietly; "no matter where you are, even though in the heart of a forest and think you are miles away from any other human being, never talk your plans over aloud. Even trees sometimes have ears."

The two spies looked at each other in a way that showed they knew what Dick had reference to, but said nothing.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### REINFORCEMENTS FOR FORT WASHINGTON.

An orderly came across from Fort Lee next morning.

He had a message from General Greene to Dick.

The general wished Dick to come over at once.

Dick hastened to obey.

He accompanied the orderly back across the river, and reported to General Greene at the latter's headquarters.

"You wished to see me, General Greene?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply; "I wish you to keep watch, and as soon as the troops arrive at Hackensack bring me information to that effect."

"Very well, sir; I will enter upon the work at once."

"I think they should reach there within a day or so."

"Yes, I think so."

Dick began his work at once.

He made trips out toward Hackensack every forenoon and afternoon during the next two or three days, and then on the afternoon of the fourth day he found the troops encamped at Hackensack.

Bob Estabrook and the other "Liberty Boys" were tickled to see Dick once more.

They had feared that he might have been captured by the British during his trip from North Castle through the British lines with the dispatches from the commander-in-chief to General Greene.

They were eager to hear Dick's story of his adventures, but he told them he did not have time to tell it, just then.

"I must hasten back and inform General Greene of the presence here of the troops," he said. "I will be back, then, as soon as I can get back, and will tell you all about it."

The boys had to be satisfied with this.

Dick hastened back to Fort Lee and informed General Greene of the arrival of the troops at Hackensack.

"So they have arrived?" the general remarked; "good! Now, I shall reinforce Fort Washington, and I think we shall be able to hold it against the British."

Dick said nothing, but the youth had his doubts regarding this.

It would no doubt be possible to hold the fort against an attack by double the number of the fort's defenders, but the British would bring an overwhelming force to the attack.

At least, that was the way Dick looked at it; but he was a youth, and did not feel like saying this to the general.

The general told Dick he would accompany him to the encampment of the troops at once, and they mounted horses and rode away.

It did not take long to reach their destination, and Generals Greene and Putnam had a long talk together.

Dick, of course, joined his company of "Liberty Boys," and detailed his adventures while making the trip from North Castle to Fort Washington with the dispatches.

"And now what is going to be done?" asked Bob Estabrook, when Dick had finished, and the conversation had turned on the present; "I wonder why General Greene is here?"

He has come for troops with which to reinforce Fort Washington," replied Dick.

"But I thought you said you brought dispatches from the commander-in-chief instructing General Greene to evacuate Fort Washington."

"So I did."



"Then why is he reinforcing it, and making preparations to try to hold it?"

"For the reason that he has received an order from Congress instructing him to hold Fort Washington at all hazards, and he is going to obey Congress."

"Oh, that is it, eh?"

"Yes."

An eager light appeared on Bob's face.

"Say, there'll be some lively fighting there, then, won't there?"

"I think so, Bob."

"Then I wish our company of 'Liberty Boys' would be among the troops chosen to reinforce the garrison at Fort Washington!"

"It will be," said Dick, with a smile.

"It will?"

"Yes; I saw to that. I told General Greene we would wish to be among the troops chosen, and he said he would see to it that we were."

"Hurrah!" cried Bob.

"Hurrah!" cried the other members of the company.

The "Liberty Boys" were a brave lot of youths.

If there was any fighting, they always wished to be in it.

Hence they were delighted when Dick told them they would be among the troops chosen to reinforce Fort Washington.

Soon all was bustle in the encampment.

The word went around that troops were to go at once to Fort Lee.

There they would remain until after nightfall.

Then they would be transferred across the river under the cover of darkness, and the British, if they had spies watching, would not know that Fort Washington had been reinforced with fresh troops.

One thousand of the best men of General Putnam's division were selected to go.

The company of "Liberty Boys" was among the others.

As soon as the men had been selected, the march to Fort Lee was taken up.

It was not a long march to the fort, and the men had plenty of time to rest before it was time to make the trip across the river.

It was ten o'clock when the work of transferring the men was begun.

This was no small task, as only small boats were at hand.

It would take many trips backward and forward by each of the boats before the thousand men would be across.

Then there was danger that some of the British war-

ships might get wind of what was going on, and put in appearance and cause lots of trouble.

The transfer from the west to the east bank of the Hudson was accomplished in safety at last, however.

The British warships failed to put in an appearance.

General Greene had himself superintended the work, when the task had been successfully accomplished, and had seen the troops safely and comfortably installed in the fort, he returned to his quarters at Fort Lee, well pleased.

"I believe you will be able to hold the fort against all the men the British can bring against you, colonel," Dick heard him say to Colonel Magaw, just before he took his departure.

The colonel replied that he thought so, too, but the youth imagined there was not as confident a ring to his voice there might have been.

The youth shook his head.

"There is going to be some terrible fighting here before long," he thought; "and I have fears for the result. Will the 'Liberty Boys' will try to do their duty, come what may!"

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE FALL OF FORT WASHINGTON.

"Well, boys, this is becoming monotonous!" said Estabrook, with a discontented look on his face.

More than a week had elapsed since the troops had come to Fort Washington to reinforce it.

During that week everything had been quiet.

The British had made no demonstrations.

It began to look as if they were not going to attack.

They were only biding their time, and getting good ready, however.

Later events proved this.

"Don't fret, Bob," said Dick, with a sober expression of countenance; "I think that it will be lively enough here in a few days, at furthest, to suit even your taste."

On the fourteenth the commander-in-chief arrived at Fort Lee.

When General Washington learned that no steps had been taken to evacuate Fort Washington his heart sank.

He knew that the garrison was doomed, unless it was taken away from the fort before the British appeared, but it was too late to do anything, for that night several of the British warships passed up the river between the forts, and



ay the British appeared before Fort Washington in overwhelming force.

"You won't have to complain of monotony any more, Bob," said Dick, drily, as they stood looking down at the British; "there are enough redcoats down there to make it lively, I think."

"I should say so, too, Dick. Say, there must be ten to fifteen thousand men down there!"

"I judge that fifteen thousand will come close to the mark, Bob."

"While we have only a little more than three thousand."

"That is right. They outnumber us five to one."

"That is terrible odds. Do you think Colonel Magaw will fight them?"

"I don't know."

"There comes a messenger," said Bob; "now we will soon know what the British have to say."

The message the redcoat brought was short and to the point.

In it, General Howe, who was in personal command of his troops, demanded prompt and unconditional surrender of the garrison, under penalty of having the entire garrison cut to the sword in case his demand was refused.

"Tell General Howe," said Colonel Magaw, coldly and sternly, "that if he wants this fort he will have to come and take it!"

The redcoat saluted and withdrew, and Dick cried:

"Three cheers for Colonel Magaw!"

The cheers were given with a will, and Colonel Magaw rushed with pleasure, and lifted his hat in acknowledgment.

"We will hold the fort as long as we can, boys," he said. They have an almost overwhelming force, but we will not surrender the fort without first striking a blow for the great Cause of Liberty!"

Again the men cheered the colonel, and all got ready for the engagement which they knew would soon begin—or rather which they thought would soon begin.

As a matter of fact the British did not make an attack that day.

It is hard to say why they did not.

Probably General Howe's proverbial caution was responsible for it.

He was a man who never attacked until after he had considered matters thoroughly.

This is not a bad habit for a general to have.

History abounds with the names of generals who might have acquired this habit with honor to themselves and profit to the brave men who were sent to unnecessary and certain slaughter.

Next day, however, the sixteenth of November, 1776, the British attacked Fort Washington.

The engagement was a sharp one.

The Americans fought with desperate courage.

Fighting from behind the works of the fort, they were enabled to inflict great damage upon their enemies, whose very numbers made this the easier to accomplish.

The "Liberty Boys" fought with such desperate energy, such dash and daring that they attracted the attention of all, and made themselves felt by the redcoats in a way those worthies did not like.

Dick and Bob were right in the front, urging their men on to still greater exertions.

The "Liberty Boys" seemed to be insensible to fear for their personal safety.

They exposed themselves recklessly.

Yet they did not meet any greater casualties than the others.

This is often the case.

Fortune seems often to favor those who are careless of their own safety.

After the fighting had been going on for some time, the inevitable seemed about to happen.

The British had advanced till they were close to the works of the fort.

Soon, unless something was done to check their advance, they would enter the fort, and the fight would be a hand to hand one.

Then, of course, being outnumbered so greatly, the Americans would not stand much chance against the redcoats.

It would become more of a massacre than a battle.

Dick realized this, and he made up his mind to make a desperate attempt to stop the advance of the British.

He communicated his plan to Bob, who moved among the "Liberty Boys" and informed them of what they would be expected to do.

Filled with the enthusiasm of the battle fever, they were ready to obey the commands of Dick and Bob.

This having been decided, Dick was ready to act.

Suddenly he leaped up on top of the earthworks, and, waving his sword, cried:

"Follow me, 'Liberty Boys!' We will teach those redcoats a lesson that they will remember for a long time! Follow me!"

And the "Liberty Boys" followed their brave young leader as quickly as they could.

They were up on top of the works, and then over them, almost before one could think.



The British who were nearest the youths, paused and stared at them in amazement.

Dick did not give them time to recover from their surprise.

He leaped forward, waving his sword.

He knew that the muskets were loaded, and he leaped to one side, and cried out:

"Fire!"

The "Liberty Boys" raised their muskets and fired a volley.

"Now, boys," shouted Dick, "one determined rush and the day is won! Follow me!"

He leaped forward, waving his sword, the "Liberty Boys" following closely.

The British troops were plainly dismayed at the brave and fearless move made by the "Liberty Boys."

They could not understand it.

They could account for such daring action on the part of the Americans only in two ways: It was inspired by foolhardiness or by the presence of a very strong force within the fort.

Thinking the latter the more likely explanation of the bold move, the British fell back at the point where the "Liberty Boys" were attacking.

The next moment the "Liberty Boys" were upon them.

The youths charged the redcoats with fixed bayonets.

The mix-up was terrible.

The British were thrown into confusion.

Had the entire garrison now sallied out, and attacked the British at the point of the bayonet, as the "Liberty Boys" had done, the redcoats might have been routed completely.

The garrison did not do it, however, and after a terrible hand-to-hand conflict with the redcoats for the space of ten minutes or more, Dick ordered a retreat to the fort, as he saw reinforcements coming to the assistance of the division that had been attacked and handled so roughly by the "Liberty Boys."

The youths turned and ran to the works and leaped over, before the redcoats had time to recover from the disorder into which the attack had thrown them, and thus they escaped being fired upon as they retreated.

The wonderful feat performed by the brave youths was cheered by the American soldiers, and it inspired the fort defenders to still greater efforts.

The result was inevitable, however.

The redcoats outnumbered the Americans five to one, and it was a physical impossibility that they could be kept out of the fort.

Closer and closer they drew to the works, and at last were pouring into the fort in great numbers.

The fight became a hand-to-hand affair.

There were shouts and cries of pain.

It was terrible!

And through it all the "Liberty Boys" fought with desperate energy and valor.

They were fierce in their attacks upon the incoming redcoats, and did great execution.

Colonel Magaw was here, there and everywhere, encouraging his brave men, but he saw that it was useless to continue the fight longer, and decided to surrender in order to save the lives of his men.

He ordered the flag lowered, and a white one hoisted, and the battle came to an end.

Dick and Bob and their "Liberty Boys" were slow to throw down their guns.

They were glad of it a few moments later.

They felt that they would rather die fighting than to surrender.

Still, they could not hope to do anything unaided, and they were on the point of throwing down their guns when they saw some of the Hessians, the hired soldiers of the British, bayoneting the brave patriot soldiers in cold blood.

This was too much for Dick and his companions.

"We will never surrender to be murdered," cried Dick. "Hold onto your guns, and follow me!"

With the words he ran to the side of the fort next to the river, and, leaping over the works, ran toward the river, followed by Bob and the other "Liberty Boys."

They were followed by a great crowd of redcoats, who yelled and threatened at a great rate.

Their muskets were empty, so they could not fire upon the fleeing youths.

They could only give chase and yell at them to stop.

This, of course, the youths would not do.

"We will not stop and wait to be bayoneted to death," said Dick to Bob. "We will take to the boats and get across the river if possible."

The youths were more than matches for the redcoats when it came to getting over the ground swiftly.

They were young and active, and fleet of foot.

The shore of the river was quite steep here, and required something in the way of surefootedness, and here again the youths outclassed their older and clumsier pursuers.

They widened the space between themselves and the redcoats.



They succeeded in reaching the river fifty yards in advance of their pursuers.

There were a sufficient number of boats there to carry the "Liberty Boys" across the river, and they leaped into the boats recklessly, cut the painters, and, seizing the oars, rowed out upon the bosom of the mighty river.

This, quickly as it had been accomplished, consumed some time, and the redcoats were at the water's edge by the time the boats were a dozen feet away from the shore.

Some of the redcoats plunged into the water and reached out in a desperate attempt to get hold of the boats, while some of them threw their muskets at the occupants of the boats.

One of the muskets struck the arm of one of the youths and broke it, and this so incensed Dick that he drew his pistols and fired two shots at the redcoats.

"Take that, you scoundrels!" he cried.

This put a stop to the attempts of the British soldiers to stop the progress of the boats.

They saw they could do nothing, and remained standing on the shore, gazing after the "Liberty Boys" in blank discomfiture.

Suddenly they gave utterance to shouts, and began waving their hands and dancing up and down in excitement.

"What's the matter with the fools now?" asked Bob, staring at them.

"I know!" exclaimed Dick, in a dismayed tone; "yonder come a couple of the British warships!"

The youths looked up the river, and sure enough, there came two warships.

They were half a mile away, and were bearing down upon the boats as rapidly as the light wind would permit them.

"Pull!" cried Dick; "pull for your lives, boys! We do not want to let those British capture us now!"

"We won't let them capture us!" cried Bob, and the others echoed the youth's remark.

The youths bent to the oars.

They rowed slantingly across the river.

The British on the warships saw them.

They evidently understood the situation, for they opened fire with the cannon.

Several of the cannon balls struck the water near the boats.

The British gunners were not very good marksmen, however, and none of the boats were hit.

Then there came the roar of cannon from the further shore.

The garrison at Fort Lee had awakened to the danger

of the youths in the boats, and had opened fire on the warships.

They kept up such a rapid fire that the attention of the British on the ships was attracted, and the boats were allowed to proceed on their way unmolested.

"That was all that saved us," said Dick, as they were disembarking, after reaching the other shore. "We would have been captured had not the enemy been engaged by the Fort Lee guns."

"I guess you are right," agreed Bob; "well, we were lucky to escape from the fort, and lucky to escape from the ships. We have been lucky all around."

"So we have, Bob."

They hastened up to Fort Lee.

They found the commander-in-chief standing there, gazing across at Fort Washington.

"It is terrible!" he said, grasping Dick's hand and wringing it; "it is a terrible, an awful blow to the Cause! But what hurt me most, Dick, was to be obliged to stand here and see my brave men bayoneted, murdered in cold blood, I thought at first that I could not stand it!"

"It was awful!" said Dick. "That was what caused we 'Liberty Boys' to make a break for liberty. We saw that we would be murdered, and thought that we might as well try to escape. If we were captured and killed, it was no more than would happen to us anyway; that was the way we figured it."

"And rightly; I am glad you escaped! Ah! if only all could have done the same! Nearly three thousand of the best troops are prisoners over there, my boy!"

"It is a great loss, your excellency!"

"Yes; but not irreparable—it shall not be irreparable, Dick! The people of America must and shall be made free! No matter if the British do triumph for the present, the time is coming when the tables shall be turned. We have Right upon our side, and Right must and shall triumph!"

#### THE END.

The next number (6) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' DEFIANCE; OR, 'CATCH AND HANG US IF YOU CAN,' by Harry Moore.

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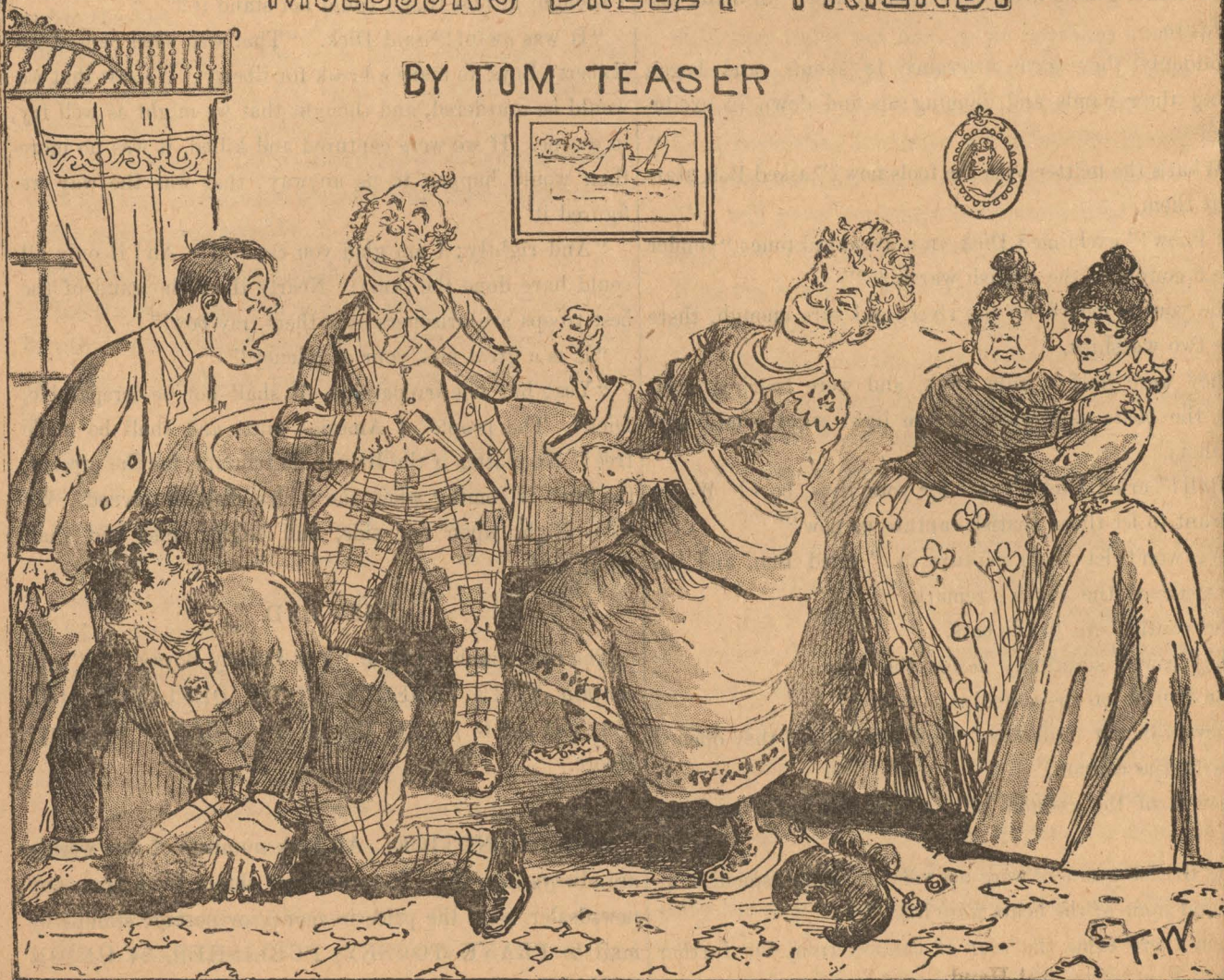
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